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ABSTRACT

This study described a program for improving students' study skills aimed at improving academic performance. The targeted population consisted of students in two public high schools and one parochial grade school in a medium-sized metropolitan area located in central Illinois. The lack of these skills by students at all levels had been demonstrated through surveys, teacher observations, professional writings, and poor student achievement. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that many students failed to possess adequate study skills which included note taking, test preparation, time management, and organizational skills. Baseline data demonstrated that students were lacking in the aforementioned skills. Through intervention, the researchers hoped to enhance student academic performance. It was also their desire to lower student stress levels by diminishing homework anxiety. This was accomplished through visual displays, direct instruction in study skills, and improved organizational techniques. The research suggested that many teachers are often ill prepared to effectively teach study skills. The research also suggested that parental involvement is a key factor in determining student academic achievement. It was hoped that the interventions would have a positive impact on student achievement and time management skills. Although most of the numbers did not indicate significant improvement, the students gained knowledge about various study skills and when best to implement them. (Contains 7 graphs and 23 references. Appendixes contain numerous survey instruments and tabulations of survey data.) (Author/RS)

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IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH THE ENHANCEMENT OF STUDY SKILLS

Marvin Smith
Ralph Teske
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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of the Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & SkyLight Professional Development

Field-Based Masters Program

Chicago, Illinois

May, 2000

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M. Gossmeyer, M. Smith, Ralph Teske

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Abstract

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Date: May 2000

Title: Improving Student Performance through the Enhancement of Study Skills

This study described a program for improving students' study skills aimed at improving academic performance. The targeted population consisted of students in two public high schools and one parochial grade school in a medium-sized metropolitan area located in central Illinois. The lack of these skills by students at all levels had been demonstrated through surveys, teacher observations, professional writings, and poor student achievement.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that many students failed to posses adequate study skills which included note taking, test preparation, time management, and organizational skills. Our baseline data demonstrated that our students were lacking in the aforementioned skills.

Through intervention, we hoped to enhance student academic performance. It was also our desire to lower student stress levels by diminishing homework anxiety. This was accomplished through visual displays, direct instruction in study skills, and improved organizational techniques.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted fourth grade class and the targeted freshman and sophomore classes demonstrate inadequate study skills, which hinder their ability to learn and retain academic information. The evidence used to verify the existence of the problem comes from teacher assessment, classroom observation, student work, and student note-taking.

Immediate Problem Context

This action research project is being carried out in a parochial elementary school and two public high schools. The parochial elementary school (Site A) draws students from a variety of local communities and operates within a larger urban community. One public high school (Site B) operates within an incorporated village. The other public high school (Site C) serves several surrounding villages with eight feeder schools. The elementary instructor is responsible for all content areas and the high school instructors teach math and social studies respectively.

School Setting

Site A

Site A is a parochial grade school with kindergarten through eighth grade students attending. The total school enrollment is 196, composed of 55.5% White, 44.49% Black, and .01% Hispanic students. Low-income families represent 35% of the total student population. The religious affiliation is as follows: 49% of the students are members of non-Lutheran congregations, 33% are members of the sponsoring Lutheran congregation, 9% are members of other Lutheran congregations, and 9% do not claim any church affiliation. Recently, the sponsoring congregation has been affiliated with another congregation of the same faith. Member families are not charged tuition, but are expected to maintain a minimum contribution level of $26 a week in their offering envelopes. The current tuition rate per year for non-members is $1650 for one child, $2195 for two children and $2470 for three or more children. These amounts are divided into nine monthly payments paid throughout the school year.

The instructional staff consists of nine full-time teachers, a principal, two pastors, and two part-time teachers, all of whom are White. The regular full-time staff is 80% female and 20% male. There are also numerous volunteers who assist the staff and students throughout the school year. The average class size is 21.7 students. The average teaching experience is 14.4 years. The principal, pastors, and two teachers currently have their master's degrees.

The school utilizes two buildings. The main building, constructed in 1958, provides classroom space for kindergarten through eighth grade, with the exception of the second grade. The main building also contains the computer room and the

gymnasium, which also serves as the cafeteria. The main building was remodeled in 1994 when new floor tile, counter tops, and doors were installed throughout the school. The interior and exterior walls were also painted at this time. The second grade classroom is located across the street in the old school building which was constructed in 1928. The old school building houses the library, a child-care facility, and a pre-school, which opened in 1994. This building is connected to the church, which is utilized for chapel worship services. The kindergarten through second grade are self-contained classrooms. Some departmentalization occurs in grades three through eight.

The daily class schedule consists of seven class periods, which are 45 minutes in length. There is currently an emphasis on upgrading computer equipment. Each classroom is equipped with a power Macintosh computer, which is used primarily for an accelerated reader program. The computer lab has 23 Apple II computers that are networked, using a Macintosh computer as a server. The office is equipped with IBM compatible computers. The office is the only area in the building that has access to e-mail and the Internet (School Report Card, 1998).

The targeted fourth grade class at Site A consists of 22 students. The students are in contact with two to four different teachers daily. The students are in contact with five different teachers throughout the week. The students remain in their room, while the teachers come into the classroom for various subjects.

Site B

Site B has an enrollment of 1,199 students. The ethnic breakdown is as follows: 94.1% White, 3.7% Black, 1.4% Hispanic, .07% Asian, and .01% Native American. Low-income students constitute 11.6% of the total school enrollment. Limited-English-

Proficiency students are represented by 0.3% of the student body, and dropout rate is 1.6%. The average daily attendance rate is 91.5%, the student mobility rate is 18.1%, and the chronic truancy rate is 0.8%.

The school staff has 64 White teachers, of whom 56% are male and 44% are female. Of the 64 instructional staff members, 56.1% have a master's degree. The average teaching experience for classroom teachers is 16.4 years. The pupil-teacher ratio is 17.2:1, and the pupil administrator ratio is 127.9:1. There are many support staff members providing services for the students. They include three full-time and two part-time guidance counselors, two deans, a social worker, a prevention coordinator, a school nurse, and a liaison officer. Within the building, there is a superintendent, principal, associate superintendent, two administrative assistants, and an athletic director (School Report Card, 1998).

There are eleven academic subject areas offered to the students. The curriculum is compartmentalized into three divisions; each headed by a different administrator. The school day has seven class periods, with each class 46 minutes long. Many of the students, especially underclassmen take seven classes each day. The school offers a wide variety of co-curricular opportunities for the students. The school building opened in 1953 as a four-year high school. Due to increasing enrollment, the original building had to be expanded. The new addition was completed in 1960 with the construction of a new cafeteria, auditorium, administrative offices, and an academic wing, which doubled the number of available classrooms. The current structure is well equipped to meet the needs of the student body, with the exception of

the indoors athletic facilities, which are in need of expansion and updating. Site B is located in a rural area, which borders a large, urban community.

The targeted classroom at Site B is located in the west wing of the high school referred to as the Social Studies Wing. There are eight classrooms and one computer lab in this area. The classroom contains the following: 30 student desks, a three-computer work station with internet access, two chalkboards, four bulletin boards, and access to a TV/VCR and Overhead Projector. There are also seven pull-down maps and ample source material available for student use. The classes involved in the action research are World History I courses, involving 44 students.

Site C

Site C contains grades nine through twelve and serves 2,191 students. Ninety-eight and six tenths percent of the students are White. Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander students each account for 0.6% of the student population. Black students comprise 0.1% of the student body. The school has a 6.0% dropout rate, and a graduation rate of 71.2%. Thirteen and eight tenths percent of the students come from low-income homes. There are no students classified as Limited-English-Proficient. The school has an attendance rate of 92.2% and a mobility rate of 7.6%. The average class size is 20.6. Site C employs 118 teachers of whom 40.1% are male and 59.9% are female. White teachers comprise 98.2% of the staff. Black and Asian/Pacific Islander teachers each account for 0.9% of the teaching staff. The teaching staff has an average experience of 19.1 years. Teachers who hold bachelor's degrees make up 50.9% of the staff, while teachers who hold master's degrees or higher make up 48.6% of the staff. The previous figures indicate a discrepancy in the school report card. The

pupil to administrator ratio is 365.2:1, while the pupil to teacher ratio is 21.1:1. The operating expenditure per pupil is $6,318. The average teacher's salary is $41,583 (School Report Card, 1998).

Support staff includes three superintendents, three principals, seven counselors, two school nurses, two technology coordinators, a liaison officer, and one security guard. The school day is divided into six periods, each of which is 50 minutes in length. There is also an early bird period 50 minutes in length. The curriculum is divided into eight departments. Each department is lead by a department chairperson. Students may take as many as seven courses per semester. Many of the courses are a full year however; a few are one semester in length. There is a plethora of academic and extra-curricular opportunities for students in this district.

The targeted classes at Site C are Title I mathematics classes. There is a limit of twelve students per section. Due to the small class sizes, there is ample attention given to each student's individual math needs. There are two computers in the classroom with Internet access. Students are given time to complete the majority of assignments in class.

The Surrounding Community

Site A

The surrounding community has many older homes. They are predominantly single family structures with a median value of approximately $24,400. These homes and properties are rented by 35% of the current occupants. Very few of the students attending site A live within walking distance of the facility, and therefore, need to be

transported by carpool or public transportation. The median family income is $18,564, reflecting a poverty level of 33.3% (Census, 1990).

Site A is located in a large city and is the only parochial school in the immediate area. The number of families that live outside the school zip code area amount to 79% of the total school enrollment. The average teacher salary is $27,068 and the administrator's salary is $44,367. The per pupil expenditure is $2,051.29. The school is owned and operated by the sponsoring congregation. The day-to-day operation of the school is overseen by the school board. The school board consists of six members elected by the congregation to serve two-year terms. One other individual from an affiliated congregation serves on the board in an advisory role. The school board chairperson is a member of the church council. The church council acts on behalf of the congregation, and must answer to the congregation because the congregation is the ultimate authority (School Report, 1998).

There are many community concerns influencing Site A. They are neighborhood crime, availability of drugs, vandalism, and gang activity. These concerns are addressed often by the sponsoring congregation and the school. The congregation and the school have sponsored neighborhood clean-up days, food drives, and education programs to address the drugs, gangs, and vandalism concerns in the community.

Site B

The surrounding community is a mixture of old and new homes. Many of the homes located in the older sections of the village were constructed before or shortly after World War II. The surrounding village subdivisions have homes built after 1960, with many constructed in the last twenty years. The average home selling price was

$89,000 in 1998. The village is a blue-collar community with a population of 6,100. The high school operates on a per pupil budget of $6,258. The average teacher's salary is $40,036, with the average administrator's salary $63,843. Eighty-eight percent of the community is White, non-Hispanic. Within the village limits, 11.7% of the households exist below the poverty level, and 21.8% of the single-family homes are rental property. The median household income is $30,686, with many individuals employed in the large, neighboring urban community (Census, 1990; School Report Card, 1998).

The community has nine separate school districts: one high school district and eight grade school districts (kindergarten through eighth grade), which all send their students to the community high school. The districts have made a concerted effort over the past few years to meet and discuss joint concerns, especially in the area of curriculum. Site B is a close-knit community with a long history dating back to the early 19th century. A strong relationship exists between the community and the high school.

The high school has recently implemented a technology plan, putting four computers in every classroom, establishing Internet access, upgrading all computers, and outfitting three new computer labs. The teaching staff is currently undergoing training in the integration of technology across the curriculum.

Site C

Site C draws students from four different communities. The largest community has a population of 34,000, while the other villages are considerably smaller. Of the 34,000 people who reside in the largest community, 98.22% are White, .44% are Hispanic, .17% are Asian/Pacific Islander, and .16% are African American. The median family income is $31,533, while the per capita income is $12,246. The median age of

residents is 34.7 years. Seventy-five and seven tenths percent of residents hold high school diplomas, while 10.5% hold bachelor's degrees or higher.

The city was founded in 1824 and became incorporated in 1849. The city operates under a city manager and council form of government. The city council consists of a mayor and four commissioners. The public park system consists of twelve parks, two golf courses, an ice skating arena, and over 2,600 acres of land, which provides recreation for the residents. There is a shopping mall and numerous retail stores within the city limits. There is also a hospital that serves the community and surrounding areas.

National Context of the Problem

The poor results caused by students' ineffective study habits or unwillingness to accomplish assigned learning tasks often frustrate teachers. Part of this frustration stems from textbooks and other materials that require students to perform a given task without first showing them how. Learning how to study efficiently can save students time, energy, and aggravation. Students at every academic level need help with their study skills from time to time, but there are as many approaches to the task as there are teachers. What comes under the heading "study skills" is a many-shaded palette of tips, tricks, and habits needed to get through school (McCoy, 1997, p.1).

Fry (1989), author of an eight-book series entitled How To Study states, "The reality is that many students nationwide, from grade school through college, are not learning the skills they need for success" (McCoy, 1997, p.2). Of course, there still exist the self-motivated, high-achievers, with strong academic backgrounds, and well-developed study skills. The problem is that the numbers of these students in schools all

around the country seem to be dropping, while the ill prepared, unmotivated students continue to increase year after year. Many fingers are being pointed, aimed at placing blame on one group or another. As in most situations, the blame has to be shared by many. Parents, teachers, administrators, school districts, communities, and students must all assume some measure of responsibility if the problem is to be remedied.

Lawrence Green, a Los Angeles based educational diagnostician, estimates that under achievers make up as much as 20 percent of the school population. Many students lack the study skills and the ability to connect the cause of not studying to the effect of poor academic performance (Hunker, 1999, p.1). He later states, "It's natural for a 13-year-old boy to enjoy skateboarding over studying for a science test. The difference between the achieving student and the underachieving student is that the achiever will prioritize studying over skateboarding, manage his time and be very goal-directed. The poor performer will satisfy his immediate desire and go skateboarding and not link that decision to his poor grade on the science test" (Hunker, 1999, p.1).

The problem of inadequate study skills continues to generate concern at the national level. Although students seek help with content problems at every grade level, the transitions from third grade to fourth grade, from elementary to middle school, and from middle school to high school, are times when even previously successful students find they need help (Hunker, 1999, p.2). In addressing the issue, the following areas of research will now be considered and discussed: student apathy, underachievement, organizational skills, note taking, and homework.

Student apathy and jobs that leave teenagers little time for schoolwork are two of the biggest problems facing today's high school teachers (Lockman, 1997, p.1).

Misguided priorities and lack of proper academic motivation combined with a strong desire to make money cause many high school students to satisfy short-term goals while losing sight of their long-term objectives.

It has been found that very bright students who coasted through elementary school suddenly hit a wall when they reach middle school because they never developed proper organizational and study skills. While every child is unique, the following warning signs are possible symptoms of an underachiever:

1. The child scores well in standardized tests but does poorly in schoolwork.
2. The child puts off or fails to complete work on a consistent basis.
3. There is a drop in grades that continues for more than a semester.
4. The child isn't motivated and doesn't respond to parental threats or rewards.
5. The child is afraid to make mistakes or try anything new.
6. Success in other areas, such as sports or extracurricular activities, begins to flag.
7. Projects are not completed, and homework often is missed.
8. The child who once enjoyed school now dreads it and is unhappy.
9. The child exhibits poor self-control and poor organizational skills.
10. Poor or failing grades are met with a nonchalant attitude.
11. The child loses self-confidence and considers himself incapable of success (Hunker, 1999, p.4).

Students fail to see the relevancy solid study skills will have as they advance to their next academic level. With little regard for the future, students often walk into a classroom set up for failure due to improperly developed study habits.

The student who knows and uses proper organizational skills can often succeed when others fail. According to education experts and students themselves, some of the secrets of study skills are: 1) setting priorities; 2) study everywhere; 3) get organized; 4) learn how to read; 5) schedule your time; 6) take good notes; 7) turn in neat work; 8) speak up in class; 9) study together; 10) test yourself; and 11) do more than you're

asked (Kiester & Kiester, 1992, p. 142-144). This no-nonsense approach to study skills, while appearing to be overly simplistic, is exactly what many students do not do and then wonder why they are not academically successful. Students who know how to learn tend to outperform those who simply study. In a review of 14 studies, Anderson and Biddle (1975) noted that students who were given information, while studying, about the questions to be asked at the conclusion of the reading assignment, tended to do significantly better on tests than students who were not given the information (Kras, Strand, Adendroth-Smith, and Mathesius, 1997, p.1).

Many students do not know how to take notes effectively. They hurriedly scribble down the information presented to them by an instructor, and later, when they wish to study this information, have a difficult time logically putting it all together. The notes are not labeled, dated, or written in such a way as to have any value to the student. It is of paramount importance that teachers take the time to instruct students in proper note taking techniques. In order to master large volumes of information, careful use of highlighting, underlining, or note-taking in order to identify main ideas for later review is necessary. Choosing what to ignore can be as important as figuring out what to remember when time is short (McCoy, 1997, p.1).

Another important aspect of study skills is homework. Many positive effects have been found. Homework improves study skills, helps students learn factual information, develops self-direction, develops responsibility, and involves parents in their child's education (Black, 1997, p.36). According to Harris Cooper, who has reported extensively on homework in American education, the negative effects are "more interesting". It can overwhelm students and cause them to turn off. It can prevent their

using after-school time for more active pursuits and cause them to take shortcuts (such as copying or cheating). It can promote interference by parents in their children's learning. Spending more time on homework does not automatically raise achievement. Quality over quantity appears to be a proper assessment of homework and study habits. To help students understand the value of homework and to add to their learning, teachers need to be sure students transfer the knowledge and skills they have learned in school to solve problems outside of school (Black, 1997, p. 36).

The problems associated with improper study habits demonstrated by students at all levels of schooling have been documented by research for many years. According to Sacks (as cited in Kras, et al., 1997, p1), five levels for teaching students to take responsibility for their study habits have been identified: (1) understanding and using study aids in a textbook, (2) preparing for, and participating in class, (3) thinking critically, (4) displaying knowledge, and (5) learning for learning's sake.

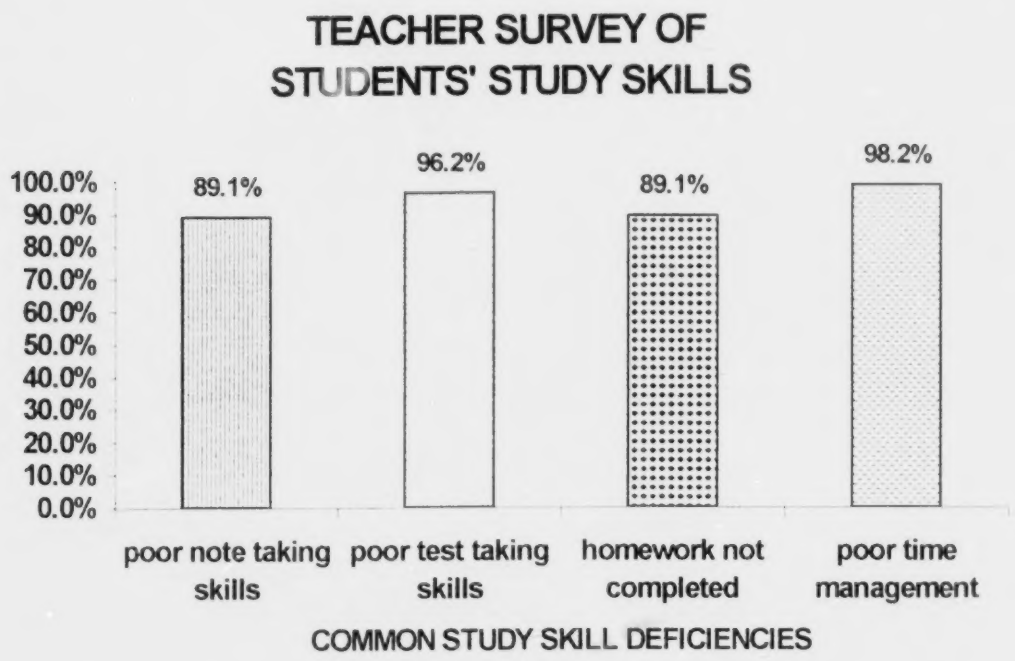
CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

Students with incomplete work and a consistent lack of study skills have been a problem in schools for years. Students consistently forget homework, books, and other supplies they need for school. This makes it difficult for students to function efficiently in the classroom. Students have difficulty completing assigned homework and using appropriate time management skills for test preparation. Teachers have observed this difficulty for many years. For many students it is a matter of balancing time commitments. For others, it is a matter of organizational skills, or lack of parental involvement. It seems that whatever strategy is attempted, teachers and parents alike get frustrated with the lack of study skills exhibited by students. This study has been based on data collected at three targeted schools. Information was gathered through the use of teacher, parent, and student surveys, combined with student reflections and parent interviews.

Graph I



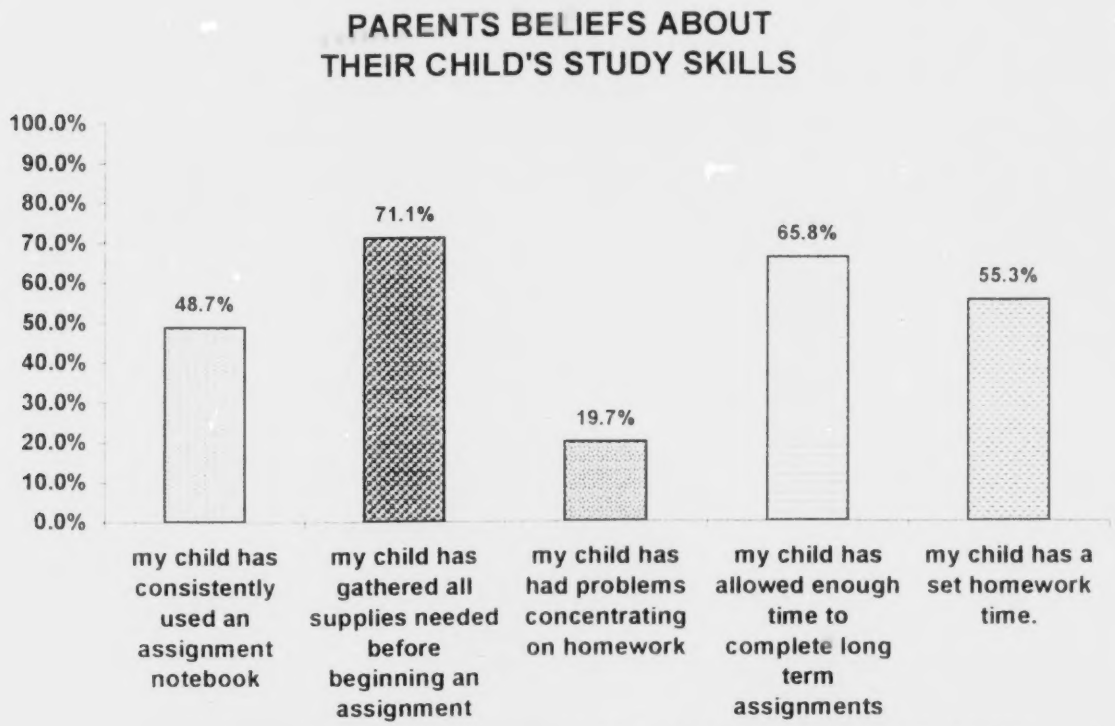
Teacher Surveys

Teachers at the targeted schools were asked their opinions about the study skills of students at their respective sites. Graph I indicates the percentage of teachers that noted some deficiencies in students' study skills. The study skills highlighted from the survey on Graph I are: poor note taking skills, poor test taking skills, homework not completed, and poor time management.

The results of the teacher survey indicated that 98.2% of the teachers surveyed felt that poor time management was an area where students were most deficient. Similarly, deficiencies were also noted by 96.2% of the teachers surveyed in regards to poor test taking skills exhibited by students. Poor note taking skills along with

homework not completed were listed by 89.1% of the teachers surveyed as areas where students were deficient.

Graph II

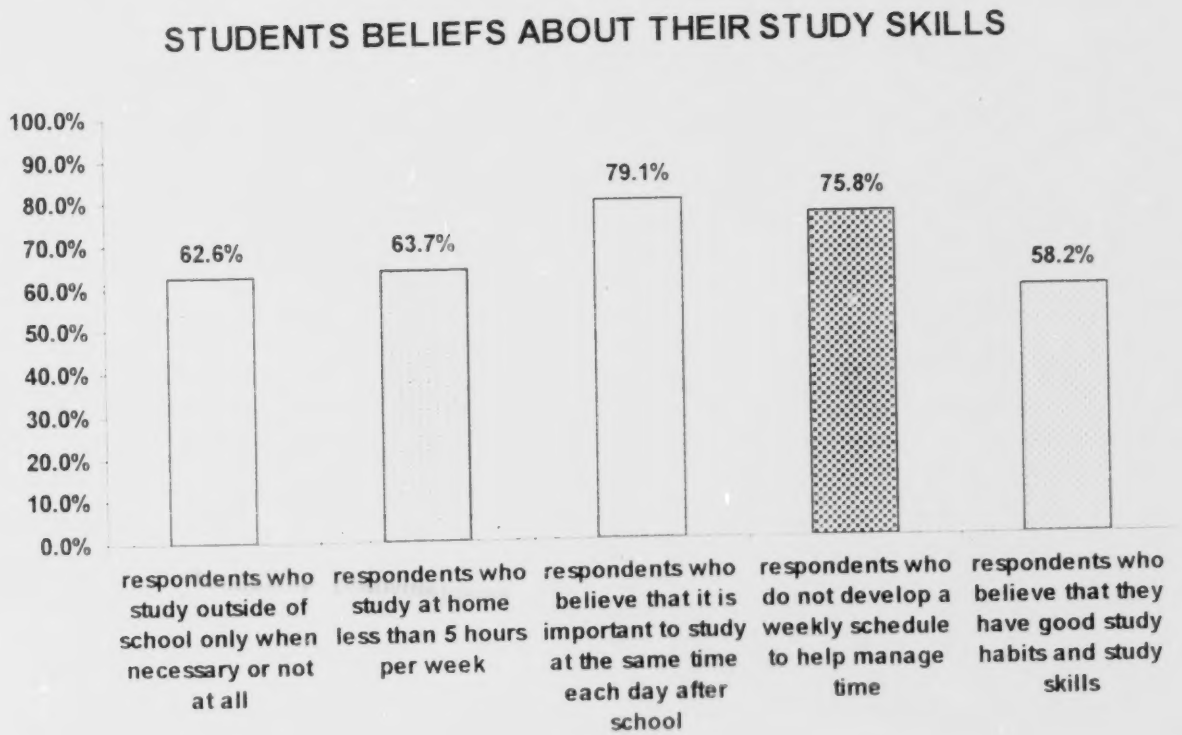


Parent Surveys

The pre-intervention parent survey indicated that many of the parents believe that their children have adequate study skills. Over 70% of the parents indicated that their children had almost always or often gathered all of their supplies before initiating a given task. Over 60% of the parents stated that their child allows enough time to complete long term assignments. Almost half of the parents stated that their child has consistently used an assignment notebook, while 55.3% said that their child had a set homework time. Only 19.7% admitted to their child having difficulties with concentration

during homework (See Graph II). These parent responses contrasted sharply with the results of the teacher survey.

Graph III


STUDENTS BELIEFS ABOUT THEIR STUDY SKILLS
100.0%
90.0%
80.0%
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
62.6%
63.7%
79.1%
75.8%
58.2%
respondents who study outside of school only when necessary or not at all
respondents who study at home less than 5 hours per week
respondents who believe that it is important to study at the same time each day after school
respondents who do not develop a weekly schedule to help manage time
respondents who believe that they have good study habits and study skills

Student Surveys

Students of the targeted classes were surveyed prior to intervention. Graph III shows the students responses to some of the survey questions. The survey indicated that 58.2% of the students believe they have good study habits and study skills, with 79.1% stating that it is important to study at the same time each day after school. Their responses to other questions contradict these numbers. Over 63% of the students

indicated that they study five hours or less per week, and more that 75% do not develop a weekly schedule to help manage their time. Also, 62.6% of the students study only when necessary or not at all.

The student responses to the pre-intervention surveys are consistent with teacher observations. Students often believe they have good study habits, however, their responses indicate they do not implement skills which support good study habits. It has been observed that students lack the proper academic discipline to develop and use proper time management and organizational skills to study smarter, not harder.

Probable Causes

The examination of the literature pertaining to the causes of ineffective study skills by students revealed several issues. Many students exhibit low interest, improper self-motivation, low expectation levels, and a true lack of ownership in their education. Poor organization and time management skills further compound the problem. The diminishing role of parents in directing their child's education and helping establish goals has had a negative impact on student performance. Sports, music, scouts, jobs, and other extracurricular activities compete with classroom work for the student's attention, time, and effort. The unwillingness of many classroom teachers to devote the time necessary in the instruction of proper and effective study skills has also impacted student achievement. Due to these factors, many students struggle academically to succeed.

The most challenging task for any teacher is motivating the unmotivated student. According to Mellody Gotwalt, a motivational psychologist who works with students struggling with motivation rather than subject matter, three principles are necessary in building motivation: The students must want the results, they must believe they can achieve them, and they must believe that effort will win them (Hunker, 1999). The

disinterested student often fails to recognize the relevance of what is being taught and therefore, has no motivation to learn. Mary Mansell, a high school science teacher stated, "I try to help the students see relevance, and instill in them a few basic skills. When they don't do well it isn't because they don't have the ability, it's because they don't have good organizational or good study skills" (Lockman, 1997, p.1). An increase in student interest and expectation levels can often be attained when a teacher incorporates proper learning strategies while teaching a lesson. Once students see they can improve by using simple study techniques, their motivation level increases. For example, if a student needs to remember the causes of World War I, a simple mnemonic device can be used. The four "MAIN" causes of World War I were Militarism, Alliances, Imperialism, and Nationalism. Sometimes even the simplest learning strategy can motivate students to do well.

The makeup of the American family continues to be in transition as more marriages end in divorce and one-parent families, along with second and third marriages, become more prevalent. Unfortunately, children often respond to such turmoil in their personal lives by becoming indifferent about many things, including their schoolwork. "A child is born with a desire to learn," stated Lawrence Green, an educational diagnostician. "A child needs that desire to survive. If he loses that desire, parents need to know that there's something unnatural about that" (Hunker, 1999, p.1). It is extremely important for students to know that their education is supported at home. Parents who demonstrate indifference about schoolwork create major headaches for teachers. Not only is schoolwork not being completed, but quite often these students become discipline problems as well.

Another issue is the role parents play when they do assist their children with homework. Many parents feel inadequately equipped to help their children with homework. According to Kay (1994), three of the reasons are changes due to school reform, lack of information about the curriculum, and a belief that specific training is

needed to help children with special needs. At times, parent involvement can also turn into parental interference. Parents may confuse their children if they use different instructional techniques than are used by teachers in the classroom (Black, 1996). It appears that in many cases, parents need more direction, guidance, and communication from teachers on how to best assist their children with schoolwork.

Lack of time to complete assigned work has continued to be a favorite excuse used by students at all levels. Many students have chosen to become involved in numerous extracurricular activities, which do require a tremendous amount of time and energy. It has also become more common for students to carry a full course load with no study hall. However, homework is still assigned and must be completed. This can add up to many hours of homework a night, which has to be sandwiched between practices, clubs, jobs, and other activities and obligations. On some nights it doesn't all come out peaches and cream (Hinchey, 1996). As more students engage in after school activities two, three, and even four times a week, "homework nights" can be dreaded grinds to get through rather than the learning experiences that teachers intend (Corno, 1996). It has been found that spending time on homework doesn't automatically raise achievement (Black, 1996; Cooper, 1989). Part of the problem focuses on inadequate time management and lack of motivation to complete the assigned tasks. Educators have suggested that homework is an activity that can remain rewarding for only so long. Therefore, if students are required to spend too much time on academic material, they will soon grow bored with it (Cooper, 1989). These facts certainly present a challenge to teachers to decide when and how much homework to assign.

Student lack of understanding of course content is another probable cause of weak study skills. Some students feel that homework is "busywork" and will not help them master material they could not understand in class. Many students who struggle academically, especially those who teachers feel should be the most conscientious in

completing their work, report that because they understand so little of the coursework in class, that they can't complete the individual work. And that even if they did, their efforts would be too little, too late, to receive a passing grade (Hinchey, 1996). Additionally, all students, at one time or another, are forced to experience homework "overload", with five or six extensive assignments one evening, and hardly any work the next. It is at this time that weak organizational and time management skill become evident. Another concern is that teachers underestimate the time it takes for students to complete an assignment (Black, 1996). Homework should not be assigned with the intent to punish students. The intent is for academic enrichment, not for controlling students (Ornstein, 1994).

The issues of low student interest, improper self-motivation, low expectation levels, along with inadequate organization and time management skills, combined with parent concerns, poor homework performance, and unacceptable teacher instruction in basic learning strategies have initiated this action research project in our classes.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Does a day ever pass in any school without someone asking for help with study skills? How often is that question associated directly with the overlapping of study skills and study habits? Regardless of the effectiveness of skills, good habits are essential to success. Teachers, parents, counselors, and administrators have all been involved in various attempts to help students learn the necessary skills and habits. The ability to set goals and use time wisely, being able to approach a textbook and make sense of it, and knowing how to listen and take notes without feeling overwhelmed are vital to success in school and beyond. The literature addresses these issues and others in an effort to devise strategies for an effective and positive intervention.

Study skills are often referred to as learning strategies. They include homework, organizational, time-management, note taking, and test taking skills. According to Ornstein (1994), they are cognitive processes that students need in order to facilitate their own learning and to improve their academic performance in all subject areas. Christen & Murphy (1995) stated there is a renewed emphasis being placed on study skills. National studies and scholars responding to their recommendations steadfastly

unite on a single issue--- study skills are a critical component in the learning process. This renewed interest, however, has not made its way into enough classrooms across the country. Many teachers do not teach these skills because they assume that the students have already mastered them in past years, or in previous grades (Sedita, 1995). Such an assumption has led to students with insufficient skills, moving through an increasingly challenging curriculum, without the proper academic foundation to be successful. The trouble is many teachers and administrators are unclear about how to integrate these skills into the curriculum or how to teach them (Ornstein, 1994).

The literature also discusses the issue of homework. Every day, in classrooms across the country, teachers face the same dilemma. Why are students not successful on homework assignments? The literature suggested several possible solutions for the lack of homework completion and poor homework performance. Many of these observations focus on the teacher's awareness and ability to direct appropriate tasks for learning with reinforcement strategies. Also, the parent role in the learning process was examined along with how the teacher can help facilitate increased parent involvement with homework assignments by checking their child's work for completion, neatness, and accuracy. "Parent participation, in conjunction with reinforcement strategies, may have a positive effect on factors associated with school success" (Callahan, Rademacher, & Hildreth, 1998, p. 137).

There is support in the literature for the overall use and value of homework. "Homework has a positive effect on achievement, but the effects vary greatly by grade level" (Cooper, 1989, p.88). It has also been noted that homework improves students' attitudes toward school, promotes study habits, aids in the understanding and retention

of material, and involves parents in the educational process (Gajria & Salend, 1995). While there still is support for the overall practice of homework, the sheer amount of homework that teachers assign has little to no relation to any objective indicator of educational accomplishment (Corno, 1996). If teachers expect their students to successfully complete homework, there are several guidelines they must follow. Teachers need to lay out expectations about homework early in the year. Students need to know that the completion of homework to the best of their ability is important to their success. Teachers need to create assignments that have a purpose (Paulu, 1998). Assignments that are no more than busywork can cause students to become frustrated and make them feel that their teachers do not care about them or that the homework is assigned as punishment. Assignments that cause students to think and to integrate the subject with others should be created. The assignments should be focused and clear. They should also be varied in length and nature (Paulu, 1998).

The literature indicated that teachers must emphasize and model strong study skills. It is never too early to begin teaching organizational skills that the students will need throughout their lifetime. Some of these skills include; studying at the same time every night, removing distractions, gathering all needed supplies, and proper note taking (Paulu, 1998).

Note taking is one of the most important study skills teachers can emphasize because students must know how to synthesize information and organize their thoughts in written form. Many students rely too much on their memory, and take incomplete notes, or no notes at all (Fajardo, 1996). Most teachers require students to take notes

at the same time they are trying to perceive information. If the information is simple enough this may be fine, however, for more complex information, the student should have enough time to perceive the essence of the information before writing the notes (Nwokoreze, 1990). Also, students need to learn that note taking requires different methods depending on the source of information. Recording notes from textbooks requires identifying main ideas, rephrasing information in their own words, as well as capturing the information with which they are unfamiliar. Taking class notes is somewhat different. A topical, short sentence approach, possibly using some form of shorthand or symbols, in a sequential pattern that follows the teacher's lecture pattern works very well. Research or library notes require a style which must be more in-depth and detailed because, unlike a textbook, library books must be returned (Fry, 1996). The value of taking notes is seriously diminished if the information is not organized, reviewed, rewritten, and incorporated into an overall study skills program.

Research on the function and worth of note taking is mixed. There are data reporting that effective note taking is correlated with student achievement; there are other studies that indicate the activity has no effect; and a few that show it has dysfunctional effects (Ornstein, 1994). The reasons for this mixed data seem to rest with the students. How the information is processed and utilized by the students determines whether note taking has a positive or negative effect on academic achievement.

A student's ability to score well on tests begins with good study habits. Organization, planning, and time management are skills essential to becoming a successful student. There are very few students who can learn and memorize all the

information they need to know for tests merely by listening. Students must realize very early in their schooling that learning is an active process. Being an active learner requires reviewing material, rewriting notes, rereading text material, constructing mnemonics to aid in memorization, using graphic organizers, and possibly forming study groups (Kassel, 1996). Many students' experience test anxiety. Quite often, the source of this anxiety is lack of proper preparation and inadequate study skills. The active learners lessen test anxiety by utilizing proven study strategies while the passive learners continue to struggle and become more stressed as the school year progresses.

There is no magic potion to give students so they can all experience total success in school. However, there are ways to enhance achievement by teaching students better study habits. Ornstein (1994, p.88) stated, "We cannot assume students know how to learn or what is important to learn. These techniques must be taught in an organized and systematic manner throughout the schooling years (K-12)." It is our intention to incorporate a study skills program within our current curriculum to improve the academic performance of our students.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of input from a cooperative activity, students will compile a list of good study habits. This information will be catalogued into four bulletin board displays constructed and maintained by student groups. During the period of August 1999 to December 1999, the targeted high school and fourth grade students will increase their ability to apply various study skill techniques, as measured by student reflection and teacher observation.

As a result of homework timings, during the period of August 1999 to December 1999, the targeted high school and fourth grade students will increase time management skills, as measured by the difference between their estimates and actual completion times.

As a result of direct instruction in note taking, during the period of August 1999 to December 1999, the targeted high school and fourth grade students will demonstrate an increased aptitude in test and quiz preparation, as measured by teacher observation and the use of graphic organizers.

As a result of teacher modeling of various study skills, during the period of August 1999 to December 1999, the targeted high school and fourth grade students will demonstrate an increase awareness of various study skills as well as an increased ability to choose the appropriate study skill, as measured by student reflections and student surveys.

In order to accomplish the project objectives the following processes are necessary:

1. The creation of bulletin boards that support concepts of proper study skills.
2. The students will be instructed in the use of homework timings.
3. Surveys will be used to assess students' progress during the intervention.
4. Surveys will be used to assess parents' perspectives of their student's use of study skills.
5. The teacher will be required to model and demonstrate the proper use of study skills.

These interventions will be utilized within the established curriculum at each school.

Project Action Plan

The following is the action plan to be administered to the targeted group of students set up on a week by week basis. One of the first things to be done will be to set aside one bulletin board in the classroom designed specifically around the following topics: study skills, note taking, test taking, outlining, time management, learning strategies, organizational skills, and the completion of homework. These bulletin boards will be changed periodically to match the specific study skill being emphasized at the time. Also, an immediate goal is to survey students, parents, and teachers in regards to their opinions and attitudes as they relate to the aforementioned topics. This intervention will take place over a sixteen-week period, commencing on August 23, 1999 and concluding on December 10, 1999. After the initial week of surveys, homework timings will begin. Homework timings will involve having the students predict how long it will take them to complete an assignment. The students will record their prediction time and actual completion time on designated assignments. It is our intent to model for the students the advantages of good time management skills. Throughout the sixteen-week intervention period, a variety of learning strategies will be implemented in order to improve student performance. Students will be asked to complete reflective journals from time to time in order to document their successes or failures with this program. Parents will be interviewed randomly in regards to their child's use of study skills.

Week 1: Survey parents, students, and teachers.

Completion of the first study skills bulletin board.

Week 2: Implementation of the first study skills topic (Homework/Organization).

Introduce and explain to students the homework timings.

Week 3: Continue the teaching of study skills topics and homework timings.

Week 4: Students complete reflective journals and continue homework timings.

Week 5: Bulletin board is changed, new study skills introduced (note taking/textbook reading strategies).

Homework timings with class discussion.

Week 6: Continue week 5 study skills program.

Week 7: A recap and review of study skills presented to date.

Week 8: Reflective journals, parent interviews.

Week 9: Bulletin board is changed, new study skills introduced (test taking/time management).

Week 10: Continuation of week 9 activities.

Week 11: Continue monitoring of student progress, parent interviews.

Week 12: Reflective journals and continue monitoring of student progress.

Week 13: Bulletin board changed and recap of study skills presented to date.

Week 14: Continuation of week 13 activities.

Week 15: Begin initial assessment of study skills program.

Week 16: Parent and student surveys to be completed.

The last student reflective journal will be completed.

Methods of Assessment

Throughout the sixteen-week intervention teachers will keep a weekly journal giving feedback on problems and successes that were observed during the intervention. Study skills activity sheets will be utilized in cooperative groups to assess the effectiveness of the interventions. Student reflection sheets will also be used.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve student achievement through the enhancement of study skills. The targeted population consisted of a fourth grade class from a parochial school and selected classes from two different public high schools. At the beginning of the project, the following information was gathered, compiled, and used as baseline data:

- Teacher survey (Appendix A)
- Parent survey (Appendix B)
- Student surveys (Appendices C and D)

In gathering this information, we discovered that the opinions of teachers, parents, and students varied greatly. What teachers reported as major problems were often viewed as minor problems by parents and students. The initial data found some inconsistencies reported by parents, with some responses contradicting others. The student surveys, likewise, targeted some areas of concern, especially in regards to knowing and recognizing proper study skills. Using the results compiled in the surveys, the implementation of this project was deemed necessary and appropriate.

In an attempt to heighten awareness of study skills by the students, an initial cooperative activity took place listing and discussing proper study habits. Based on the information presented, the students designed a bulletin board highlighting one of the major points discussed. The bulletin boards were changed periodically, at least every four weeks, to visually feature a different topic being emphasized throughout the sixteen-week intervention. The students were permitted and encouraged to add information to the bulletin boards in order to demonstrate an increased understanding of the topics.

Study skills were formally taught in the classroom, in addition to normal classroom instruction. Students were introduced to a variety of topics including: organizational skills, time management techniques, proper note taking, textbook tips, memory enhancement (including mnemonics), and test-taking skills. These topics were selected so students could learn subject matter and appropriate learning strategies at the same time.

Students also participated in homework timings early in the intervention. The students would record how long they believed an assignment would take to complete. They would then compare their predicted time with the actual time it took to complete the assigned task and record their findings (Appendix E). The intent was to improve time management skills. This exercise, if done properly, would require the students to complete the homework assignment.

Parent / Teacher conferences were scheduled, at each site, during the intervention. This provided an excellent opportunity to discuss with parents different aspects of the

intervention. This feedback allowed adjustments to be made to enhance the study skills program.

The students did journal entries every four weeks to help assess the impact of the study strategies introduced. At this time, the students had the opportunity to write about the new learning strategies and how they could best be applied to their coursework (Appendix F).

The sixteen-week intervention concluded with the completion of three additional surveys, one by the parents (Appendix G), and two by the students (Appendices H and I). In addition, the students completed a final reflective journal entry assessing the overall impact of the intervention. This post-intervention information allowed comparison data to be gathered and analyzed.

Site A

The intervention began before school started with a letter explaining the action research project given to parents (Appendix J). Parents were also asked to complete a survey pertaining to their child's study habits. The signed parent letters and surveys were collected during school registration, at a parent meeting, or during the first week of classes.

During the first week of school, the targeted fourth grade class completed two study skills surveys. The students were also introduced to the first intervention topic of organizational skills. In association with the topic, the students checked their school supplies list by taking inventory to make sure they had all appropriate items with them. Homework sheets were distributed to all students to be used for recording all daily assignments (Appendix K). The assignment sheets were placed in a specifically

designated folder for the students to use throughout the intervention period. Also, at this time, the study skill bulletin board was explained, and the students were given instructions on how to use it. Each student was assigned a small section of the display board to post positive comments pertaining to study skills they witnessed demonstrated by their classmates. This procedure continued throughout the intervention, with the teacher providing verbal recognition to students exhibiting appropriate study skills.

The researcher also surveyed teachers during the first week in order to pinpoint study skills they believed were lacking. The surveys showed that teachers had major concerns with students in the following areas: organization and time management, note taking, test taking, and completing homework.

Organizational skills and homework completion remained the focus of the intervention for the next three weeks. Student assignment papers were sent home each Monday, along with a short note, which required a parent signature (Appendix L). This close monitoring of student work kept parents informed about the progress of their child, as well as, encouraged parent involvement in the learning process.

Throughout the first four weeks, the students were very active in maintaining their bulletin board with positive comments. The activity generated good class discussion and heightened student awareness in many areas of study skills. Homework timings were also introduced at this point. The timings were designed for students to improve their time management skills. For designated assignments, the students would predict the amount of time they thought it would take to complete the task and then compare this time with the actual time required. After four weeks, students completed a journal entry reflecting on their personal progress in the targeted areas.

During the second four-week period, the focus turned to note taking strategies. Several styles of note taking were demonstrated and practiced by the students in class. The emphasis was on the organization of material, not necessarily the gathering of information. In order to develop higher student interest in the activity, graphic organizers were used. The targeted fourth grade class responded well to the use of graphic organizers and this strategy would be used again when test-taking strategies were presented. The learning strategies from the first four weeks continued, being reviewed and assessed periodically. The students completed their second journal writing and the comments showed an improved awareness of proper study habits, especially in the area of note taking. Improvement in the quality of work submitted for evaluation was encouraging for the researcher.

Midway through the intervention, the attention was shifted to test taking, test preparation, and time management strategies. The homework timing exercise was reviewed and students were encouraged to critique its value as a time management strategy. Student opinions varied, with good points made on both sides of the issue. An additional sheet, informing parents of an upcoming test, was now included in the program (Appendix M). Parent interviews were scheduled in order to check whether the new learning strategies were being applied outside the classroom. Parents, likewise, provided feedback concerning the use of the intervention strategies. The homework sheets, as well as, the parent notes associated with graded work, were discussed during the conferences. The students completed the third journal entry at the end of the twelfth week, with testing strategies the main point of focus discussed.

The final four-week period of the intervention focused on a systematic review of all study skills introduced and taught throughout the program. In the final week, the students evaluated the intervention in their final journal entry. Also, at this time, a second parent survey and two additional student surveys were completed to provide comparison data for the researcher to analyze the impact of the intervention.

Site B

The intervention began as scheduled during the first week of school. Teachers, parents, and students completed surveys, and a letter explaining the action research project was sent home to parents. After completing the surveys, the students were given an overview of the program. The information from the completed surveys was used as baseline data.

The first class activity was a cooperative lesson on study skills. Small groups, comprised of three or four students, compiled a list of what they believed were effective study skills. This information was collected, posted, and used as a basis for class discussion. From this information, major topics were selected and used as bulletin board displays throughout the intervention. The bulletin boards were changed every four weeks. The four major topics were organization and time management skills, note taking, listening skills and reading comprehension, and test taking strategies.

During the first week, a student file folder was distributed to each student. It was explained in each class that the folder was to be used to organize all course material throughout the semester. Every Friday, the folders were updated with all work completed during the week. The folders were also used for test review, note taking exercises, parent-teacher conferences, and semester exam preparation. The folders

proved to be a very valuable tool for the students, especially in the area of test preparation. The researcher found the folders to be an excellent source for tracking student performance. The modeling of proper organizational skills by the teacher throughout the semester helped students see the value of developing and utilizing the skill.

Note taking was the second topic introduced early in the program. The targeted high school students were required to obtain a notebook. In this notebook, the following information was required: chapter reading notes, video notes, class discussion and lecture notes, and current event notes. A variety of note taking styles were explained and demonstrated, along with recommendations on which style to use depending on the type of material being presented. Notebooks were evaluated twice during the intervention. The quantity and quality of information recorded by the targeted classes in their notebooks was better than in other classes taught by the researcher. It should be noted that students in the targeted classes were permitted to use their notes for pop quizzes, a practice that encouraged and rewarded the students for good note taking. Note taking continued to be emphasized throughout the entire intervention period.

From the beginning of the third week to the end of the sixth week, homework timings were done. The timings were first used for in-class assignments and quickly carried over to homework assignments. The timings were used to teach the students better time management skills by recording the amount of time they thought an assignment would take and the actual time required. The students who made an honest effort to complete the task in the prescribed manner reported positive outcomes. However, some students saw the task as unnecessary busywork. The homework

timings were discontinued at the end of the sixth week when it became evident that many students were not completing the form accurately. The homework timing sheets were replaced with a weekly assignment-tracking sheet (Appendix N). The assignment sheet was filled out at the end of each class and submitted on the succeeding Monday for evaluation. The sheets helped the students work on their organizational skills.

Every four weeks, the students completed a one-page reflective journal commenting on the study skills presented. The journal writing also allowed the students to record their positive and negative experiences working with each learning strategy. The journal entries were done in class and were a valuable assessment tool for the researcher.

In the ninth week, parent-teacher conferences were scheduled. Due to the number of parents showing up in the allotted time, conferences were limited to about ten minutes each. During this time, parent comments and questions pertaining to the intervention were discussed, report cards were distributed, and student folders were shared with the parents. Generally, the parent feedback was very positive, with only a couple of dissenting remarks made by parents of students not receiving high marks.

In the next four weeks of the intervention, test-taking strategies were the main focus. Helpful hints on how to take objective tests, such as, true/false, multiple-choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank and short answer questions were given to the students. Students practiced these strategies, first alone and then in small groups. The value of memory aids, such as mnemonic devices, was also discussed. The IGAP (Illinois Goal Assessment Program) style for essay writing was explained and practiced by all

students. These strategies, if used, would help the students improve their scores on end-of-semester exams.

During the last two weeks, the study strategies introduced during the sixteen-week intervention were reviewed. Also, the parents were asked to complete and return another study skills survey. The students, likewise, completed two additional surveys in class pertaining to their current study habits. This information was collected, compiled, and analyzed for post-intervention data.

Site C

The intervention began as planned during the first week of school. A bulletin board devoted to effective study skills and a day-by-day assignment poster was created before school began. During the first week of school, teachers, parents, and students were all surveyed in order to obtain baseline data. The teachers were asked to respond to questions about student study habits in general, while the parents were asked to respond to questions pertaining to their child's study habits and study skills. The students completed two surveys answering questions about their knowledge of study skills and which skills they use on a consistent basis. A parent letter was sent home to explain the intervention. The parents were asked to read the letter, sign it, and return it to school with their child. The researcher held a class meeting to explain the purpose of the sixteen-week intervention program to the students.

During the first two weeks, the teacher presented and modeled acceptable note taking strategies. The importance of clear, concise notes was discussed and practiced by the targeted math classes. The interventionist used a T-note format to present all lessons. While most of the students took some form of notes, many chose not to use

the T-note format used by the teacher. Even though it was recommended that each student obtain a notebook, many decided to record their notes on loose sheets of paper. Additional time was needed to better explain the purpose and value of keeping all notes together, labeled, and organized. The researcher observed some students continuing to use individual sheets of paper for notes. Upon later evaluation, the notes of these students were incomplete, disorderly, and missing important information provided by the instructor. The researcher also noticed some students discard their notes as they left the classroom. Even though the interventionist encouraged notebook organization, and graded notebooks on two separate occasions, some were evaluated as unacceptable. For these reasons, it was concluded that some students, through lack of effort, did not improve their note taking skills.

The value of proper time management and organizational skills was also introduced, with homework timings beginning at the end of week one. The timings were abandoned during the fourth week when it became evident that most of the targeted Title I math students were filling out the form using inaccurate information.

During weeks three and four, the teacher incorporated course specific study skill topics, such as, the proper way to read and use a math textbook and tips to improve comprehension of course material. Initially, the students responded well with the introduction of each topic, but their attention span soon wavered and it became necessary to move quickly to the next topic. However, the researcher noted some improvement in reading comprehension at this time with improvements in quiz scores.

At the end of the fourth week, the students completed a reflective journal assessing the impact of the intervention to that point. The journals were supposed to be

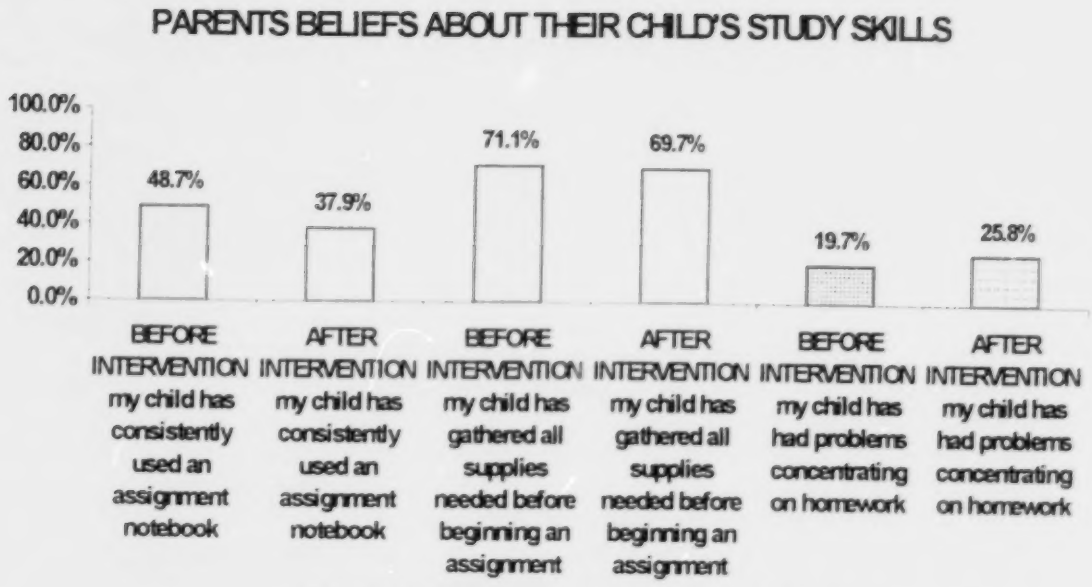
done three additional times, but due to time constraints, the plan was adjusted to include just one additional reflection at the conclusion of the intervention.

The study skill bulletin board was changed as planned every four weeks. The display presented new learning strategies and their connection to mathematics. The information was discussed in class and student response to the material was favorable.

During week ten, parent-teacher conferences were held. The teacher discussed with each parent the importance of encouraging, modeling, and reinforcing good study skills at home. In conversations with parents, it was evident that many of them were not involved with their child's academic preparation on a daily basis. Some parents reported that they seldom witnessed their child doing any homework in the evening, and they had not checked or helped with homework since the child entered high school. The researcher attempted to encourage the parents to become more involved, at least in checking to make sure homework was completed.

During weeks eleven through fifteen, the teacher continued to monitor the progress of the students. The teacher continued to discuss the importance and value of learning effective study skills at the high school level. Test-taking strategies were taught and practiced in preparation for upcoming semester exams. In the last week of the intervention, the students completed a reflective journal and two post-intervention surveys. The parents completed one additional survey that answered questions about their child's study habits over the intervention period. This information was used to analyze the results of the intervention.

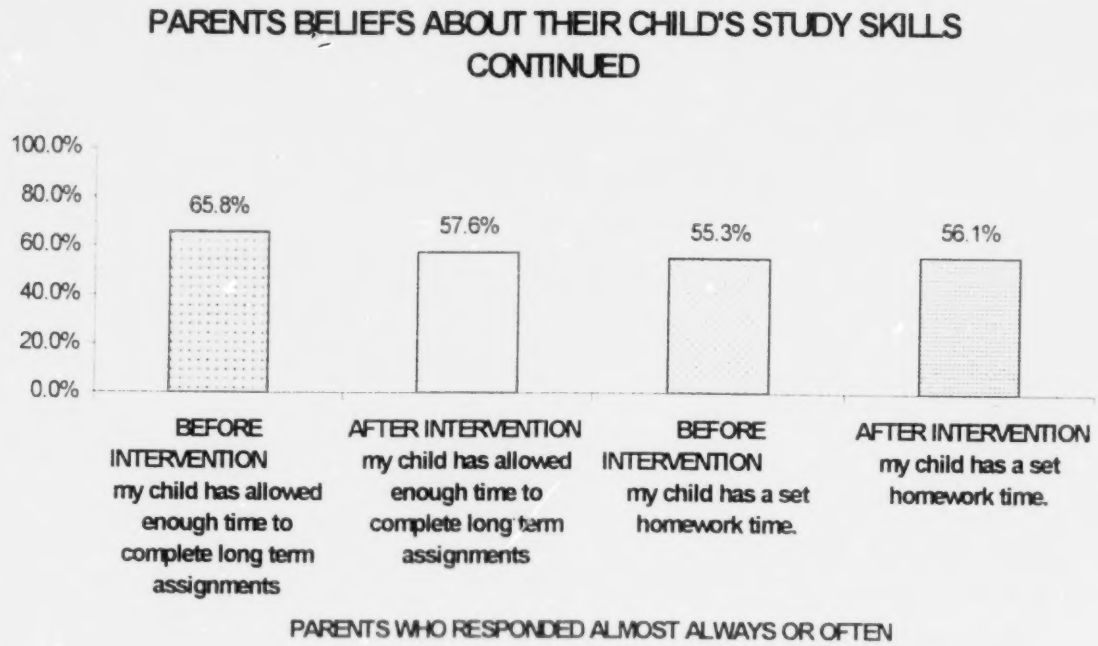
Graph IV


PARENTS BELIEFS ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S STUDY SKILLS
100.0%
80.0%
60.0%
40.0%
20.0%
0.0%
48.7%
37.9%
71.1%
69.7%
19.7%
25.8%
BEFORE INTERVENTION my child has consistently used an assignment notebook
AFTER INTERVENTION my child has consistently used an assignment notebook
BEFORE INTERVENTION my child has gathered all supplies needed before beginning an assignment
AFTER INTERVENTION my child has gathered all supplies needed before beginning an assignment
BEFORE INTERVENTION my child has had problems concentrating on homework
AFTER INTERVENTION my child has had problems concentrating on homework
PARENTS WHO RESPONDED ALMOST ALWAYS OR OFTEN

Parent Surveys

Graphs IV and V show results of the post-intervention parent survey. The results of this survey were disappointing. Prior to intervention, 48.7% of the parents indicated that their child had consistently used an assignment notebook, and 71.1% of the parents indicated that their child had gathered all necessary supplies before beginning homework. After intervention, only 37.9% of the parents surveyed indicated that their child had consistently used an assignment notebook, and 69.7% of the parents indicated that their child had gathered all supplies necessary before beginning homework.

Graph V

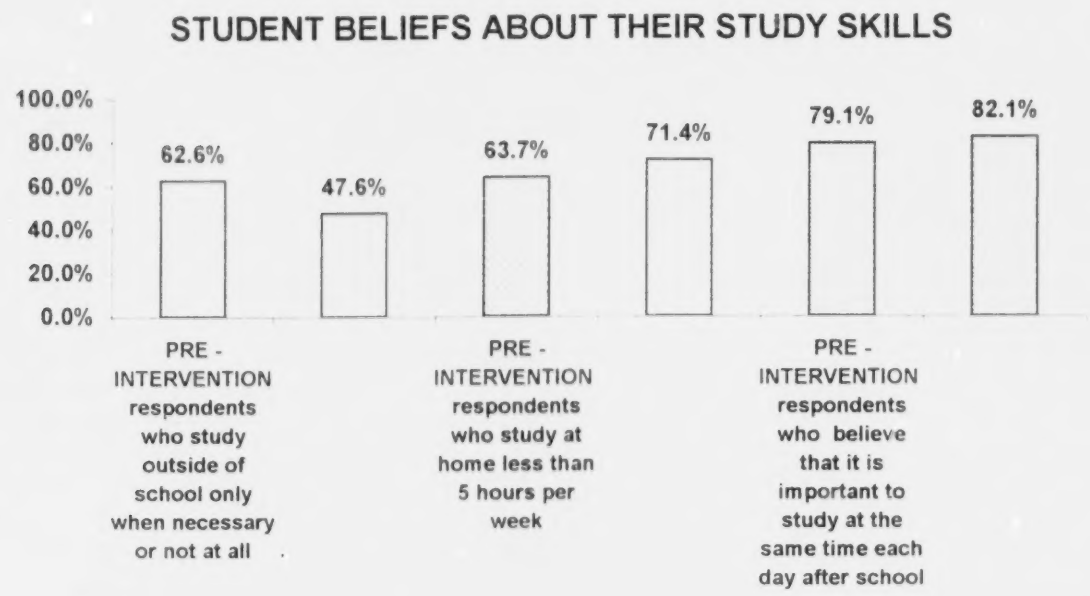

PARENTS BELIEFS ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S STUDY SKILLS CONTINUED
100.0%
80.0%
60.0%
40.0%
20.0%
0.0%
65.8%
57.6%
55.3%
56.1%
BEFORE INTERVENTION my child has allowed enough time to complete long term assignments
AFTER INTERVENTION my child has allowed enough time to complete long term assignments
BEFORE INTERVENTION my child has a set homework time.
AFTER INTERVENTION my child has a set homework time.
PARENTS WHO RESPONDED ALMOST ALWAYS OR OFTEN

Also, before intervention 19.7% of the parents responded that their child had had problems concentrating on homework, however, after intervention, that number jumped to 25.8%.

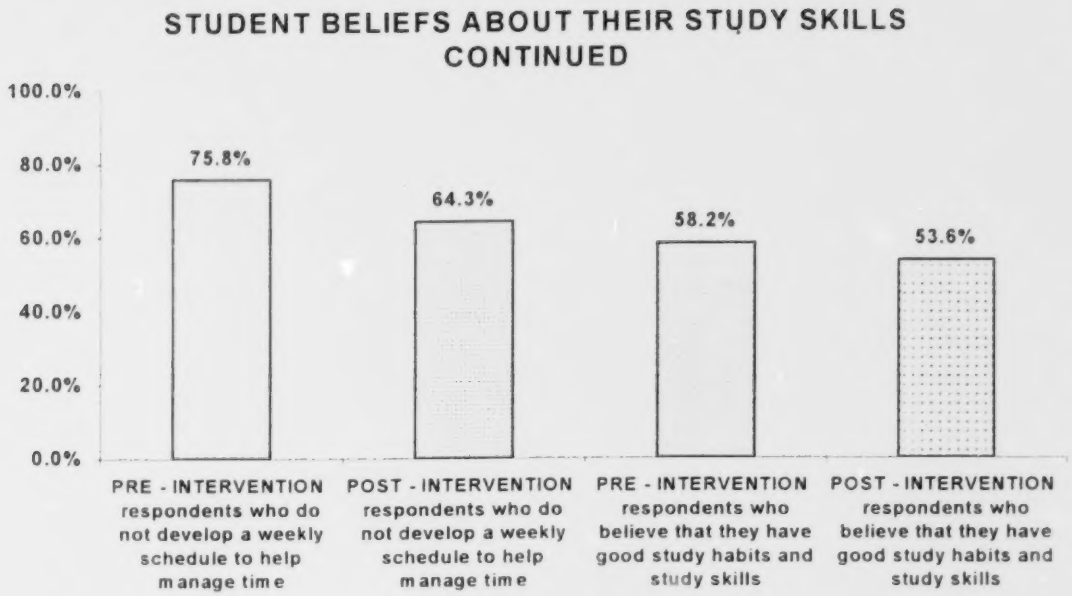
Graph V shows that prior to intervention 65.8% of the parents responded that their children had allowed ample time to complete long term assignments, and 55.3% of them responded that their child had a set homework time. After intervention, 57.6% of the parents indicated that their child had allowed ample time to complete long term assignments, and 56.1% of them indicated that their child had a set homework time.

A couple of factors should be considered when evaluating these results. First, the parents took the pre-intervention surveys the first week of the new school year. It is our contention that many of the parents may have forgotten about some of their child's problems with homework and school over the summer break. Also, two of the three sites involved freshman students as the targeted group. It is often a difficult transition for students to adjust to the increased homework demands at the high school level. A similar transition occurs for students entering fourth grade, which was the situation at Site A. The parents may be indicating that homework assignments are often longer in length and greater in difficulty at the targeted grade levels.

Graph VI


STUDENT BELIEFS ABOUT THEIR STUDY SKILLS
100.0%
80.0%
60.0%
40.0%
20.0%
0.0%
62.6%
47.6%
63.7%
71.4%
79.1%
82.1%
PRE - INTERVENTION respondents who study outside of school only when necessary or not at all
PRE - INTERVENTION respondents who study at home less than 5 hours per week
PRE - INTERVENTION respondents who believe that it is important to study at the same time each day after school

Graph VII


STUDENT BELIEFS ABOUT THEIR STUDY SKILLS
CONTINUED
100.0%
80.0%
60.0%
40.0%
20.0%
0.0%
75.8%
64.3%
58.2%
53.6%
PRE - INTERVENTION respondents who do not develop a weekly schedule to help manage time
POST - INTERVENTION respondents who do not develop a weekly schedule to help manage time
PRE - INTERVENTION respondents who believe that they have good study habits and study skills
POST - INTERVENTION respondents who believe that they have good study habits and study skills

Student Surveys

Graph VI and VII show the results of the post-intervention surveys compared to the results of the pre-intervention surveys. The results of these surveys showed that the intervention generally had the desired effect. After intervention, 47.6% of the students indicated they studied at home only when necessary or not at all. This compares to 62.6% of the students who indicated they studied at home only when necessary or not at all prior to intervention. When asked how important it was to establish a set homework time each day after school, 79.1% indicated this was very important prior to intervention, compared to 82.1% of the students indicating this was very important after intervention. The percentage of respondents who studied at home less than five hours per week increased from 63.7% prior to intervention to 71.4% after

intervention. While this result would appear to be negative in nature, it may have been caused by increased efficiency while studying at school.

Graph VII also indicates positive results of the intervention. Prior to intervention 75.8% of the students surveyed indicated they did not develop a weekly schedule to help manage their time, however, after intervention only 64.3% of the students indicated they did not develop a weekly schedule to manage their time. Before intervention, 58.2% of the respondents indicated they possessed good study skills and study habits. After intervention, 53.6% of the respondents indicated they have good study skills and study habits. This can be interpreted, as a positive result because now more students are cognizant of effective study strategies needed to succeed.

Implications for Teachers

Many students do not know and have not been taught how to process information and develop an organized plan when confronted with an academic problem. Research supports the belief that one of the major differences between effective students and ineffective students is their understanding and use of successful learning strategies.

In the intervention, the researchers encountered unmotivated and disinterested students deficient in their use of study skills. The challenge was to help these students approach tasks more efficiently and effectively, thus improving their chances for success. In this endeavor, the researchers were only marginally successful. Lack of student responsibility and poor parent involvement limited the success these students experienced during the intervention.

The sixteen-week intervention program allowed ample time to introduce and practice a variety of learning strategies. However, additional time was needed to go into the depth and scope required in seeing long-term results. The researchers can only hope that the foundation has been laid for the targeted students to refine their study skills and make them study habits.

In evaluating the intervention, the researchers offer the following recommendations to teachers considering implementing study skills in their classroom:

- Make sure students see how the strategy will help them with specific learning problems.
- Identify and teach each skill by breaking it down into smaller components so all students can understand it.
- Know and understand the strategy so it can be modeled for the students.
- Review the strategies and practice them often.
- Provide praise and positive feedback for student accomplishments.

Remember that learning strategies alone will not solve all academic problems, but it does appear that strategies will help improve academic performance for many students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data collected, student achievement improved in three notable areas. The students, as documented by surveys, increased the amount of time utilized away from school to complete and review course material. The researchers reported better time management and organizational skills demonstrated by students. Also, individual class notes submitted for evaluation had more organized, readable, concise, and usable information present. Student

journals and post intervention surveys reflected an increased understanding of effective study strategies and how best to use them to improve academic achievement. In reference to homework, the number of incomplete or missing assignments was reduced and grade percentages improved for many students involved in the intervention. The number of students receiving unsatisfactory progress reports (D's and F's) decreased during the latter stages of the program. However, not all students benefited from the intervention. Students with an unfavorable opinion of school continued to academically struggle and resisted opportunities to learn new study techniques. In these cases, lack of parent involvement and poor student motivation appeared to be the main reasons for their lack of success. Letters sent home and phone calls made by the teachers elicited few parent responses.

With only minor variations, the interventions selected were implemented. However, the timetable used for the selected learning strategies did vary from school to school. The use of homework timings was part of the overall plan, but the high schools did not experience the success the grade school did with this part of the program. The student journals provided valuable information and helped track the value the students associated with each aspect of the intervention. Overall, better time management and organizational skills, along with more effective note taking were the strategies stressed the most. The researchers believed emphasizing these areas would impact student achievement faster and have positive results.

It continues to be our contention that, in most schools, the teaching of study skills is sporadic and unplanned. A sixteen-week intervention, though helpful, is not the needed solution. Student reflections indicated a need and desire to be better trained in

study skills as they move from grade school to high school and on to college. The majority of the students have not been trained in any systematic way in the use of study skills and none of the three targeted schools provide an organized curriculum concerned with the teaching of specific skills. Helping students deal with this body of knowledge is the key to learning. Learning how to learn must become a priority, not an oversight, if effective and efficient learners are the objective. According to Christen and Murphy (1984), until there is a demand from parents and administrators to provide study skills training to the teachers and until study skills become a component of the curriculum, students will continue to struggle needlessly with their studies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Homework and Study Skills Teacher Survey

Please rank the following behaviors as you have observed in the classroom.

	ALMOST ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	UNSURE
1. Homework not completed	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Poor test taking skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Poor note taking skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Not being prepared for class	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Poor time management	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Not reading for detail	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Poor memorization skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Poor listening skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Lack of accountability	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Poor summarization skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

-Totals-

Homework and Study Skills Teacher Survey (55 Responded)

Please rank the following behaviors as you have observed in the classroom.

-PRE-

	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Unsure
1. Homework not completed.	2	19	28	6	0
2. Poor test taking skills	6	20	28	1	0
3. Poor note taking skills	16	25	8	4	2
4. Not being prepared for class	3	16	31	5	0
5. Poor time management.	8	24	22	1	0
6. Not reading for detail.	17	27	11	0	0
7. Poor memorization skills.	7	17	29	2	0
8. Poor listening skills.	8	23	23	1	0
9. Lack of accountability.	13	16	25	1	0
10. Poor summarization skills.	9	24	20	2	0

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B

Parent Survey: Your Child's Study Habits

Survey #1

	ALMOST ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	UNSURE
1. Has your child consistently used an assignment notebook?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Has your child gathered all needed supplies before beginning homework?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Has your child completed homework in front of the T.V.?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Has your child had a set homework time?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Have you had to remind your child to begin homework?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Has you child stayed on task during homework time?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Has your child been easily frustrated with homework and studying?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Has your child had problems concentrating on homework?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Has your child finished homework on time?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Has your child allowed enough time to complete long term homework assignments	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

11. My child's biggest homework problem has been _____.

12. My child and I have disagreed at homework time about_____.

Comments:_____

_____.

(Adapted from Judith Dodge, Instructor, 1995)

-Totals-

Parent Survey: Your Child's Study Habits (76 Responded)

Survey #1 (PRE)

	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Unsure
1. Has your child consistently used an assignment notebook?	19	18	18	18	3
2. Has your child gathered all needed supplies before beginning homework?	31	23	17	4	1
3. Has your child completed homework in front of the television?	4	8	32	29	3
4. Has your child had a set homework time?	21	20	13	22	0
5. Have you had to remind your child to begin homework?	9	11	23	33	0
6. Has your child stayed on task during homework time?	31	22	16	4	3
7. Has your child been easily frustrated with homework and studying?	6	13	26	30	1
8. Has your child had problems concentrating on homework?	5	7	32	29	0
9. Has your child finished homework on time?	41	21	12	1	1
10. Has your child allowed enough time to complete long term homework assignments?	26	24	21	4	1

11. My child's biggest homework problem has been _____

12. My child and I have disagreed at homework time about _____

Comments: _____

_____

(Adapted from Judith Dodge, Instructor 1995)

Appendix C

SURVEY OF YOUR STUDY HABITS

Pre-intervention

Please complete this survey by placing a checkmark under the most appropriate response based on your study habits. Please be honest in your responses, as there are no right or wrong answers.

	ALMOST ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY
I use any free time at school to work on my homework.				
I use an assignment notebook to keep track of my assignments and due dates.				
I take home everything that I will need to complete my homework.				
I start working on my homework as soon as I get home.				
I work on homework at the same time every evening.				
I finish all of my homework that is due the next day.				
I start on big assignment or projects soon after they are assigned, so I will be able to complete them on time.				
I do my homework while watching television or listening to music.				
I get easily distracted when doing homework.				
I must be reminded to do my homework.				
I get help with my homework from an adult.				
I feel that teachers give too much homework.				
I feel homework is not important because you do not get graded on it.				
I go to school without completing my homework.				
I forget what homework was assigned.				
Activities and/or sports are more important to me than doing my homework.				
I forget how to do the homework after I get home.				
I forget my homework at home after I have completed it.				
When I do not understand the assignment, I quit working on it.				
After I finish my homework, I check to see that I have completed all of the assignments that are due the next day.				
I complete my homework sitting at a desk or table.				
I complete my homework lying on my bed or on the floor.				

-Totals-

SURVEY OF YOUR STUDY HABITS (91 Responded)

Please complete this survey by placing a checkmark under the most appropriate response based on your study habits. Please be honest in your responses, as there are no right or wrong answers.

-PRE-

	ALMOST ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY
I use any free time at school to work on my homework.	26	40	16	9
I use an assignment notebook to keep track of my assignments and due dates.	32	16	21	22
I take home everything that I will need to complete my homework.	66	14	11	0
I start working on my homework as soon as I get home.	23	22	24	22
I work on homework at the same time every evening.	9	27	29	26
I finish all of my homework that is due the next day.	59	18	10	4
I start on big assignment or projects soon after they are assigned, so I will be able to complete them on time.	37	31	19	4
I do my homework while watching television or listening to music.	24	20	23	24
I get easily distracted when doing homework.	21	16	26	28
I must be reminded to do my homework.	4	10	22	55
I get help with my homework from an adult.	11	10	40	30
I feel that teachers give too much homework.	9	15	45	22
I feel homework is not important because you do not get graded on it.	4	10	24	53
I go to school without completing my homework.	2	4	19	66
I forget what homework was assigned.	3	3	32	53
Activities and/or sports are more important to me than doing my homework.	5	6	21	59
I forget how to do the homework after I get home.	0	7	44	40
I forget my homework at home after I have completed it.	1	4	22	64
When I do not understand the assignment, I quit working on it.	1	7	26	57
After I finish my homework, I check to see that I have completed all of the assignments that are due the next day.	38	23	18	12
I complete my homework sitting at a desk or table.	31	21	26	13
I complete my homework lying on my bed or on the floor.	14	15	31	31

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Appendix D

Study Skills Questionnaire

Pre-intervention

What grade are you currently enrolled in? _____

1. I plan to go to college _____Yes _____No

Check the study skills training you have received instruction in during your school years.

2. Note taking _____Yes _____No
3. Test- taking _____Yes _____No
4. Time Management _____Yes _____No
6. Speed Reading _____Yes _____No
7. Reading Comprehension _____Yes _____No
8. How to Read a Textbook _____Yes _____No
9. Finding Main Ideas or Details _____Yes _____No
10. Using the Library _____Yes _____No
11. Writing a Paper On a Selected Topic _____Yes _____No
12. How To Do Class Projects _____Yes _____No

13. How often do you study outside of school? (Check one)
    a. _____every day
    b. _____at least three times a week
    c. _____only a couple of times a week
    d. _____only when I feel it is necessary
    e. _____ not at all

14. How much time do you spend studying at home each week? (Check one)

15. Do you have scheduled study time each day at school? _____Yes _____No

16. In your opinion, how important is it for students to establish regular time for studying outside of school?
    a. _____very important
    b. _____important
    c. _____not important

17. Do your develop a weekly schedule to help you manage your time?
    _____Yes _____No

18. If no, do you believe this might help you manage your study time?
    _____Yes _____No

19. Do you feel rushed to complete assignments on time? _____Yes _____No

20. Do you have a system of taking notes in class? _____Yes _____No

21. Do you have a system of taking notes from your textbook and other reading materials?
_____Yes _____No

22. Do you find it easy to summarize textbook chapters and other assignments into a few sentences? _____Yes _____No

23. How often do you summarize your work?
    a. _____almost always
    b. _____usually
    c. _____once in a while
    d. _____not at all

24. When taking lecture notes, I listen first, then write down the information in my own words. _____Yes _____No

25. In a normal week, how many pages of reading material related to schoolwork do you read?
    a. _____more than 100 pages
    b. _____75 to 100 pages
    c. _____50 to 75 pages
    d. _____25 to 50 pages
    e. _____less than 25 pages

26. While reading your assignments, do you write down questions you will ask your teacher about the next day?
    a. _____almost always
    b. _____usually
    c. _____once in a while
    d. _____not at all

27. While reading assignments, do you write down questions that will help you prepare for tests?
    a. _____almost always
    b. _____usually
    c. _____once in a while
    d. _____not at all

Most people find it necessary to reread material before they have an understanding of it. Check those types of materials you have to reread in order to understand it:

28. Sciences _____
29. Mathematics _____
30. History _____
31. Current Events _____
32. Government _____
33. Literature _____
34 Economics _____
35. Health _____
36. Drivers Training _____
37. Shop Manuals _____
38. Foreign Languages _____
39. Humanities _____
40. Speech/Theatre _____
41. English _____
42. Sociology/Psychology _____
43. Music _____
44. Art _____

45. Do you find you have to change your reading speed while reading different types of subject matter?
_____Yes _____No

46. Do you find it necessary to read you textbook and other reading material related To your schoolwork in order to receive an acceptable grade?
    a. _____almost always
    b. _____usually
    c. _____once in a while
    d. _____not at all

47. I enjoy writing papers, themes, and essays. _____Yes _____No

48. I enjoy doing projects. _____Yes _____No

49. I prefer taking multiple-choice, true-false, and matching test to essay exams. _____Yes _____No

50. In my opinion, I have good study habits and study skills. _____Yes _____No

Adapted from NASSP Bulletin. October 1985. *How Important Are Study Skills?*

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-PRE- **Study Skills Questionnaire** (91 Responded)

What grade are you currently enrolled in? 20 (4th) 64 (9th) 7 (10th)

1. I plan to go to college? 87 Yes 4 No

Check the study skills training you have received instruction in during your school years.

2. Notetaking	86 Yes	5 No
3. Test-taking	80 Yes	11 No
4. Time Management	60 Yes	31 No
5. Research Techniques	57 Yes	34 No
6. Speed Reading	14 Yes	77 No
7. Reading Comprehension	74 Yes	17 No
8. How To Read a Textbook	73 Yes	18 No
9. Finding Main Ideas or Details	79 Yes	12 No
10. Using the Library	80 Yes	11 No
11. Writing a Paper On a Selected Topic	82 Yes	9 No
12. How To Do Class Projects	79 Yes	12 No

13. How often do you study outside of school? (Check one)
    a. 7 every day
    b. 12 at least three times a week
    c. 15 only a couple of times a week
    d. 44 only when I feel it is necessary
    e. 13 not at all

14. How much time do you spend studying at home each week? (Check one)
    a. 4 more than 10 hours
    b. 29 between 5 and 10 hours
    c. 52 less than 5 hours
    d. 6 I do not study at home

15. Do you have scheduled study time each day at school? 26 Yes 65 No

16. In your opinion, how important is it for students to establish regular time for studying outside of school?
    a. 17 very important
    b. 55 important
    c. 19 not important

17. Do you develop a weekly schedule to help you manage your study time?
    22 Yes 69 No

18. If no, do you believe this might help you manage your study time?
    45 Yes 24 No

19. Do you feel rushed to complete assignments on time? 50 Yes 41 No

20. Do you have a system of taking notes in class? 53 Yes 38 No

21. Do you have a system of taking notes from your textbook and other reading materials? 42 Yes 49 No

22. Do you find it easy to summarize textbook chapters and other assignments into a few sentences? 48 Yes 43 No

23. How often do you summarize your work?
    a. 4 almost always
    b. 30 usually
    c. 49 once in a while
    d. 8 not at all

24. When taking lecture notes, I listen first, then write down the information in my own words. 47 Yes 44 No

25. In a normal week, how many pages of reading material related to school work do you read?
    a. 7 more than 100 pages
    b. 14 75 to 100 pages
    c. 19 50 to 75 pages
    d. 36 25 to 50 pages
    e. 15 less than 25 pages

26. While reading your assignments, do you write down questions you will ask your teacher about the next day?
    a. 3 almost always
    b. 4 usually
    c. 39 once in a while
    d. 45 not at all

27. While reading assignments, do you write write down questions that help you prepare for tests?
    a. 15 almost always
    b. 25 usually
    c. 28 once in a while
    d. 23 not at all

Most people find it necessary to reread material before they have an understanding of it. Check those types of materials you have to reread in order to understand it:

28. Sciences 70
29. Mathematics 58
30. History 62
31. Current Events 12
32. Government 34
33. Literature 53
34. Economics 14
35. Health 18
36. Drivers Training 10
37. Shop Manuals 16
38. Foreign Languages 32
39. Humanities 7
40. Speech/Theatre 16
41. English 57
42. Sociology/Psychology 20
43. Music 23
44. Art 28

45. Do you find you have to change your reading speed while reading different types of subject matter? 68 Yes 23 No

46. Do you find it necessary to read your textbook and other reading material related to your school work in order to receive an acceptable grade?
    a. 27 almost always
    b. 38 usually
    c. 19 once in a while
    d. 7 not at all

47. I enjoy writing papers, themes, and essays. 30 Yes 61 No

48. I enjoy doing projects. 63 Yes 28 No

49. I prefer taking multiple-choice, true-false, and matching tests over essay exams. 82 Yes 9 No

50. In my opinion, I have good study habits and study skills? 53 Yes 38 No

**Adapted from NASSP Bulletin. October 1985. *How Important Are Study Skills?* **

Appendix E

NAME:_____

TIME JUDGE

When you can estimate the time it takes to complete a job, you can make good
choices about when to start. A good "time manager" is a good "time judge."

DIRECTIONS:
Estimate how long it takes you to do the following tasks. Then do them and time yourself to see how close your estimates are.

TASK	ESTIMATED TIME	ACTUAL TIME

Appendix F

NAME: _____

IN MY OPINION,

AS I THINK ABOUT THE TESTS AND QUIZZES THAT I HAVE TAKEN THIS WEEK, I FEEL.....

AS I THINK ABOUT MY HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS THIS WEEK, I FEEL.....

AS I THINK ABOUT MY ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS THIS WEEK, I FEEL.....

Appendix G

Parent Survey: Your Child's Study Habits

Survey #2

	ALMOST ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	UNSURE
1. Did your child consistently use an assignment notebook?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Does your child gathered all needed supplies before beginning homework?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Does your child completed homework in front of the T.V.?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Does your child have a set homework time?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Do you have to remind your child to begin homework?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Does your child stay on task during homework time?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Is your child easily frustrated with homework and studying?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Does your child have problems concentrating on homework?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Does your child finished homework on time?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Does your child allow enough time to complete long term homework assignments	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

11. My child's biggest homework problem is _____.

12. My child and I disagree at homework time about_____.

Comments _____

_____

(Adapted from Judith Dodge, Instructor, 1995)

-Totals-

Parent Survey: Your Child's Study Habits (66 Responded)

Survey #2 (Post)

	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Unsure
1 Did your child consistently use an assignment notebook?	15	10	19	20	2
2 Does your child gather all needed supplies before beginning homework?	25	21	14	4	2
3 Does your child complete homework in front of the television?	7	11	26	22	0
4 Does your child have a set homework time?	19	18	8	21	0
5 Do you have to remind your child to begin homework?	5	6	15	39	1
6 Does your child stay on task during homework time?	19	25	18	3	1
7 Is your child been easily frustrated with homework and studying?	11	13	10	31	1
8 Does your child have problems concentrating on homework?	8	9	17	32	0
9 Does your child finish homework on time?	32	15	12	5	2
10 Does your child allow enough time to complete long term homework assignments?	19	19	22	5	1

11 My child's biggest homework problem is _____

12 My child and I always disagree at homework time about _____

Comments: _____

_____

(Adapted from Judith Dodge, Instructor, 1995)

Appendix H

SURVEY OF YOUR STUDY HABITS

Post-intervention

Please complete this survey by placing a checkmark under the most appropriate response based on your study habits. Please be honest in your responses, as there are no right or wrong answers.

	ALMOST ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY
I use any free time at school to work on my homework.				
I use an assignment notebook to keep track of my assignments and due dates.				
I take home everything that I will need to complete my homework.				
I start working on my homework as soon as I get home.				
I work on homework at the same time every evening.				
I finish all of my homework that is due the next day.				
I start on big assignment or projects soon after they are assigned, so I will be able to complete them on time.				
I do my homework while watching television or listening to music.				
I get easily distracted when doing homework.				
I must be reminded to do my homework.				
I get help with my homework from an adult.				
I feel that teachers give too much homework.				
I feel homework is not important because you do not get graded on it.				
I go to school without completing my homework.				
I forget what homework was assigned.				
Activities and/or sports are more important to me than doing my homework.				
I forget how to do the homework after I get home.				
I forget my homework at home after I have completed it.				
When I do not understand the assignment, I quit working on it.				
After I finish my homework, I check to see that I have completed all of the assignments that are due the next day.				
I complete my homework sitting at a desk or table.				
I complete my homework lying on my bed or on the floor.				

- Totals -

SURVEY OF YOUR STUDY HABITS (91 Responded)

Please complete this survey by placing a checkmark under the most appropriate response based on your study habits. Please be honest in your responses, as there are no right or wrong answers.

- Post -

	ALMOST ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY
I use any free time at school to work on my homework.	25	43	20	3
I use an assignment notebook to keep track of my assignments and due dates.	38	18	16	19
I take home everything that I will need to complete my homework.	66	24	1	0
I start working on my homework as soon as I get home.	25	21	28	17
I work on homework at the same time every evening.	21	40	16	14
I finish all of my homework that is due the next day.	53	31	6	1
I start on big assignment or projects soon after they are assigned, so I will be able to complete them on time.	39	32	15	5
I do my homework while watching television or listening to music.	25	17	30	19
I get easily distracted when doing homework.	17	13	42	19
I must be reminded to do my homework.	3	6	22	60
I get help with my homework from an adult.	12	14	35	30
I feel that teachers give too much homework.	13	11	53	14
I feel homework is not important because you do not get graded on it.	3	8	26	54
I go to school without completing my homework.	2	7	23	59
I forget what homework was assigned.	2	5	32	52
Activities and/or sports are more important to me than doing my homework.	3	11	22	55
I forget how to do the homework after I get home.	1	8	38	44
I forget my homework at home after I have completed it.	1	3	21	66
When I do not understand the assignment, I quit working on it.	3	3	35	50
After I finish my homework, I check to see that I have completed all of the assignments that are due the next day.	40	26	16	9
I complete my homework sitting at a desk or table.	36	30	18	7
I complete my homework lying on my bed or on the floor.	13	14	36	28

Appendix I

Study Skills Questionnaire

Pre-intervention

What grade are you currently enrolled in? _____

1. I plan to go to college _____Yes _____No

Check the study skills training you have received instruction in during your school years.

2. Note taking _____Yes _____No
3. Test- taking _____Yes _____No
4. Time Management _____Yes _____No
6. Speed Reading _____Yes _____No
7. Reading Comprehension _____Yes _____No
8. How to Read a Textbook _____Yes _____No
9. Finding Main Ideas or Details _____Yes _____No
10. Using the Library _____Yes _____No
11. Writing a Paper On a Selected Topic _____Yes _____No
12. How To Do Class Projects _____Yes _____No

13. How often do you study outside of school? (Check one)
    a. _____every day
    b. _____at least three times a week
    c. _____only a couple of times a week
    d. _____only when I feel it is necessary
    e. _____ not at all

14. How much time do you spend studying at home each week? (Check one)

15. Do you have scheduled study time each day at school? _____Yes _____No

16. In your opinion, how important is it for students to establish regular time for studying outside of school?
    a. _____very important
    b. _____important
    c. _____not important

17. Do your develop a weekly schedule to help you manage your time?
    _____Yes _____No

18. If no, do you believe this might help you manage your study time?
    _____Yes _____No

19. Do you feel rushed to complete assignments on time? _____Yes _____No

20. Do you have a system of taking notes in class? _____Yes _____No

21. Do you have a system of taking notes from your textbook and other reading materials?
_____Yes _____No

22. Do you find it easy to summarize textbook chapters and other assignments into a Few sentences? _____Yes _____No

23. How often do you summarize your work?
    a. _____almost always
    b. _____usually
    c. _____once in a while
    d. _____not at all

24. When taking lecture notes, I listen first, then write down the information in my own words. _____Yes _____No

25. In a normal week, how many pages of reading material related to schoolwork do you read?
    a. _____more than 100 pages
    b. _____75 to 100 pages
    c. _____50 to 75 pages
    d. _____25 to 50 pages
    e. _____less than 25 pages

26. While reading your assignments, do you write down questions you will ask your teacher about the next day?
    a. _____almost always
    b. _____usually
    c. _____once in a while
    d. _____not at all

27. While reading assignments, do you write down questions that will help you prepare for tests?
    a. _____almost always
    b. _____usually
    c. _____once in a while
    d. _____not at all

Most people find it necessary to reread material before they have an understanding of it. Check those types of materials you have to reread in order to understand it:

28. Sciences _____
29. Mathematics _____
30. History _____
31. Current Events _____
32. Government _____
33. Literature _____
34. Economics _____
35. Health _____
36. Drivers Training _____
37. Shop Manuals _____
38. Foreign Languages _____
39. Humanities _____
40. Speech/Theatre _____
41. English _____
42. Sociology/Psychology _____
43. Music _____
44. Art _____

45. Do you find you have to change your reading speed while reading different types of subject matter? _____Yes _____No

46. Do you find it necessary to read you textbook and other reading material related to your schoolwork in order to receive an acceptable grade?
    a. _____almost always
    b. _____usually
    c. _____once in a while
    d. _____not at all

47. I enjoy writing papers, themes, and essays. _____Yes _____No

48. I enjoy doing projects. _____Yes _____No

49. I prefer taking multiple-choice, true-false, and matching test to essay exams. _____Yes _____No

50. In my opinion, I have good study habits and study skills. _____Yes _____No

Adapted from NASSP Bulletin, October 1985. *How Important Are Study Skills?*

-POST- **Study Skills Questionnaire** (91 Responded)

What grade are you currently enrolled in? 20 (4th) 64 (9th) 7 (10th)

1. I plan to go to college? 88 Yes 3 No

Check the study skills training you have received instruction in during your school years.

2. Notetaking	88 Yes	3 No
3. Test-taking	79 Yes	12 No
4. Time Management	71 Yes	20 No
5. Research Techniques	59 Yes	32 No
6. Speed Reacing	16 Yes	75 No
7. Reading Comprehension	71 Yes	20 No
8. How To Read a Textbook	75 Yes	16 No
9. Finding Main Ideas or Details	82 Yes	9 No
10. Using the Library	75 Yes	16 No
11. Writing a Paper On a Selected Topic	81 Yes	10 No
12. How To Do Class Projects	79 Yes	12 No

13. How often do you study outside of school? (Check one)
    a. 9 every day
    b. 21 at least three times a week
    c. 21 only a couple of times a week
    d. 38 only when I feel it is necessary
    e 2 not at all

14. How much time do you spend studying at home each week? (Check one)
    a. 5 more than 10 hours
    b. 26 between 5 and 10 hours
    c. 59 less than 5 hours
    d. 1 I do not study at home

15. Do you have scheduled study time each day at school? 45 Yes 46 No

16. In your opinion, how important is it for students to establish regular time for studying outside of school?
    a. 19 very important
    b. 51 important
    c. 21 not important

17. Do you develop a weekly schedule to help you manage your study time?
    37 Yes 54 No

18. If no, do you believe this might help you manage your study time?
    45 Yes 9 No

19. Do you feel rushed to complete assignments on time? 52 Yes 39 No

20. Do you have a system of taking notes in class? 59 Yes 32 No

21. Do you have a system of taking notes from your textbook and other reading materials? 61 Yes 30 No

22. Do you find it easy to summarize textbook chapters and other assignments into a few sentences? 51 Yes 40 No

23. How often do you summarize your work?
    a. 12 almost always
    b. 28 usually
    c. 43 once in a while
    d. 8 not at all

24. When taking lecture notes, I listen first, then write down the information in my own words. 49 Yes 42 No

25. In a normal week, how many pages of reading material related to school work do you read?
    a. 9 more than 100 pages
    b. 13 75 to 100 pages
    c. 17 50 to 75 pages
    d. 25 25 to 50 pages
    e. 27 less than 25 pages

26. While reading your assignments, do you write down questions you will ask your teacher about the next day?
    a. 3 almost always
    b. 8 usually
    c. 35 once in a while
    d. 45 not at all

27. While reading assignments, do you write write down questions that help you prepare for tests?
    a. 10 almost always
    b. 27 usually
    c. 29 once in a while
    d. 25 not at all

Most people find it necessary to reread material before they have an understanding of it. Check those types of materials you have to reread in order to understand it:

28. Sciences 70
29. Mathematics 54
30. History 64
31. Current Events 15
32. Government 33
33. Literature 43
34. Economics 9
35. Health 17
36. Drivers Training 9
37. Shop Manuals 10
38. Foreign Languages 36
39. Humanities 3
40. Speech/Theatre 16
41. English 48
42. Sociology/Psychology 15
43. Music 25
44. Art 27

45. Do you find you have to change your reading speed while reading different types of subject matter? 66 Yes 25 No

46. Do you find it necessary to read your textbook and other reading material related to your school work in order to receive an acceptable grade?
    a. 27 almost always
    b. 39 usually
    c. 18 once in a while
    d. 7 not at all

47. I enjoy writing papers, themes, and essays. 32 Yes 59 No

48. I enjoy doing projects. 67 Yes 24 No

49. I prefer taking multiple-choice, true-false, and matching tests over essay exams. 80 Yes 11 No

50. In my opinion, I have good study habits and study skills? 47 Yes 44 No

**Adapted from NASSP Bulletin, October 1985. *How Important Are Study Skills?* **

Appendix J

SAINT XAVIER UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE THROUGH THE ENHANCEMENT OF STUDY SKILLS

Dear Parent,

I am currently working on my master's degree through Saint Xavier University. In partial fulfillment of this degree, I will be conducting an action research project in my classroom during the first semester. I will be attempting to enhance your child's study skills through a variety of interventions. All of these interventions are considered normal educational practice. I am looking forward to having your student in class this year, and I believe that your child will benefit greatly through his/her participation in this study. I want to ensure you that participation in this study is voluntary, and will in no way affect your child's grade and all information compiled will be strictly confidential, and no names will be included.

Please read and complete the consent form below. I would appreciate this form returned to me as soon as possible. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Matt Gossmeyer

Marvin Smith

Ralph Teske

I, the parent/legal guardian of _____ (student name) acknowledge that the teacher has explained to me the need for this research, explained what is involved and offered to answer any questions. I freely and voluntarily consent to my child's participation in this study. I understand all information gathered during this study would be completely confidential. I also understand that I may keep a copy of this consent form for my own information.

Name of student - _____

Signature of parent - _____ Date - _____

Signature of student - _____ Date - _____

Appendix K

Assignments for the Week of

_____

	Subject	Assignment	DONE
MONDAY	MEMORY		
	RELIGION		
TUESDAY	ENGLISH		
	HANDWRITING		
WEDNESDAY	SOCIAL STUDIES		
THURSDAY	MATH		
	COMPUTER		
FRIDAY	READING		
	LITERATURE		
	SCIENCE		
	HEALTH		
	SPELLING		
	CONFIRMATION		
	ART/MUSIC		
	LIBRARY		

Appendix L

Dear Parents,

Here are _____ papers completed by your child this past week. Please take a few minutes to look them over and discuss them with your child. If you have any questions, feel free to stop in and talk to me. Please sign this slip and have your child return it to me tomorrow. Thank you.

Mr. Teske

Appendix M

Test in 4th grade for the week beginning _____.

SUBJECT	DATE	DAY OF TEST
_____		MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
_____		MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
_____		MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
_____		MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
_____		MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
_____		MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
_____		MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
_____		MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
_____		MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
_____		MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

Test dates are subject to change due to scheduling conflicts, students readiness, as well as other factors. If a test date is changed, the test would be taken later that the scheduled date.

Appendix N

CLASS	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	WEEKEND